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*HAS OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM COLLAPSED?*¹

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The theory now for many years held by most critical students of the Old Testament is that the early narratives from Genesis to Kings are composite, and, further, that the sources from which they were compiled belong to different periods in Hebrew history, having been produced by authors, or schools of authors, occupying various points of view, but so related to one another that their contributions, when arranged in chronological order, reflect the course of events for many successive generations and the progressive development of ethical and religious culture among the Chosen People.

With reference to the dates of the supposed documents, especially those underlying the Hexateuch, there has always been difference of opinion among those who have adopted this general scheme. The great majority of the critics have more or less closely followed Wellhausen, whose original statement is to the effect that the Yahwistic and Elohist elements were mostly the product of the golden period of Hebrew literature, preceding the destructive invasions of Palestine by the Assyrians, the Elohist being somewhat the later of the two; that both of them had a history before they were united; that Deuteronomy appeared just before the Restoration under Josiah, and, after circulating in two editions until some time after the fall of the Jewish monarchy, finally took a form combining the peculiarities of both and was added to the preceding compilation; and that the Priestly document, which was the product of a school of writers during and after the Exile, was completed and added to the other three before 444 B.C., when the first five parts of the resulting Hexateuch were promulgated as the law of God by Ezra.

Dillmann's theory of the age of the sources differed somewhat less widely from that of the critics of the preceding gen-

¹ A lecture delivered at the Harvard Summer School of Theology, July 6, 1910.

eration. He held that the Elohist was the earliest of the four documents, and that much of the Priestly was not materially later, while the Yahwistic belonged to the middle of the eighth century; also that these three were first wrought by themselves into a composite work, to which Deuteronomy, written in the reign of Josiah, together with considerable legal matter were added during the Exile.

These are the two general forms which the "documentary hypothesis" took in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In one or the other it was generally accepted among the Biblical scholars of the Continent, and later, in spite of strenuous opposition, became prevalent in Great Britain and America. More than once there has been a report that its days were numbered; that an opposing champion, or unwitting instrument, of tradition had dealt it a mortal blow, or that its defenders were destroying it and one another. There is such a report now in circulation, and there are those who for various reasons, conscious or unconscious, "partly believe it." Is it well founded? Is this hypothesis, after all, only an eddy in which the Biblical scholars of the last thirty years, one after another, have almost without exception been caught, and from which they must escape to reach the current of real progress in knowledge of the Old Testament?

The question must evidently be divided, and it will be most convenient to inquire first of all whether Biblical scholars are abandoning the documentary hypothesis. Note the terms used. The point is not whether scholars in other fields of learning have changed their minds with reference to the validity of a Biblical theory, nor whether Biblical scholars have changed their minds with reference to views held by certain adherents of the documentary hypothesis, but whether authorities on Biblical literature are deserting the position that the Hexateuch is a composite production compiled from other works by at least four authors of as many different periods. To the question thus defined, the answer, allowing of course for sporadic exceptions under peculiar circumstances, must be a decided negative. In fact, the critics, so far from abandoning this theory, are now taking it for granted and devoting themselves to the task of perfecting its application, and that along two lines. In the first place, although they are

at one on the principle that the Hexateuch is composite, and, in the main, on the proper analysis of its contents, there are details on which they have not yet been able to agree. These they are now making the subject of research and discussion, revising past findings as it becomes necessary, and drawing more and more satisfactorily the lines separating the recognized sources. It sometimes makes much difference whether a single verse or sentence is referred to one source or another. Thus, if in Exodus, chap. 2, as Meyer claims, vs. 15 is from the Yahwist and is the continuation of vs. 10a, the reason why Pharaoh sought to put Moses to death would be, not, as one would naturally infer from the text as it stands, that he had slain an Egyptian, but that the princess, his foster-mother, had brought him into the royal family.

The analysis of the Hexateuch, however, is not complete when the critic has identified the parts, long or short, that originally belonged to the main documents. The theory, as has been intimated, is that each of these sources had a history of its own before it became a part of the present compilation; that during its separate circulation it was more or less changed and enlarged; and that, when it was finally united with one or more of the others, it was again subjected to revision to adapt it, or parts of it, to its new relations. Moreover, some additions were naturally made after the compilation had been effected. Now, it is the business of the critics to dissect, if possible, the work of the reviser and the compiler from that of the author, and thus carry the history of each of the documents back to its origin; and, although they doubtless sometimes go too far, there never was a time when they were more satisfactorily accomplishing this task. It is not necessary to go far to find examples of the result of such work. There is one in Gen. 2 10-15, where there has been inserted the description of a river that had no place in the original author's conception of Eden, and another in the next chapter, where the tree of life is just as clearly foreign to the story of the first disobedience. The skill with which such interpolations are sometimes adapted to the context is seen in Gen. 2 15, which repeats a part of vs. 1, and in Gen. 16 9 f., where the compiler who united the Yahwistic and Elohist writings made Yahweh instruct Hagar

to return to her mistress, and thus prepared the way for a second version of the story of her quarrel with Sarah, now found in Gen. 21 8 ff. The last passage, on the other hand, furnishes an illustration of another sort. In vs. 14, as translated in the English Version, Abraham "took bread and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the boy." The meaning is tolerably clear, but the sentence, which literally reproduces the Hebrew, is certainly awkward. The key to the matter is found in the Greek Version, which says that the patriarch "took bread and a skin of water, and gave them to Hagar; and he placed upon her shoulder the boy," that she might carry him as Syrian mothers still carry their babies. It is clear that this was the original reading in Hebrew, and that the compiler who added the Priestly writing to the previous compilation let it stand, but that a later reader, finding that, according to the Priestly chronology, Ishmael must have been about seventeen years of age when Hagar left home, transposed some of the words and thus suppressed an unintentional absurdity.

When the analysis is complete, and the contents of the Hexateuch have been distributed to the various authors, revisers, and compilers, it remains to fix, if possible, the dates of all these contributors. This is a complicated and difficult problem, requiring not only a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament, but a familiar acquaintance with the history of the Orient and a well-balanced judgment. The fact that there are still two schools of critics shows that it has not yet been satisfactorily solved; but both schools are at work on it, and, to prove that they are making progress without abandoning the documentary hypothesis, I will cite the opinions of representatives of each school.

Let the representatives of the school of Dillmann be Kittel, Baudissin, and König. The first differs somewhat from his chief. He maintains that the Elohist document originated near the beginning, and the Yahwistic toward the end, of the ninth century B.C.; that the original of Deuteronomy was written in the reign of Manasseh; and that the three were united with one another during or just before the Exile. Meanwhile the Priestly document, the oldest parts of which may date from the reign of Solomon, reached its final proportions, was carried by the Jews to

Babylonia, and was there added to the previous compilation. The resultant work, without the book of Joshua, was the Law promulgated in 444 B.C. by Ezra.

Baudissin puts the Yahwist about the beginning of the eighth century B.C., the Elohist a little earlier. About the same time the priests began to put into writing their ceremonial regulations, but the Priestly document in its original form was not produced much before Josiah's reformation, which is also the date of the original Deuteronomy. The first two were united before Deuteronomy was written. This last, enlarged soon after the beginning of the Exile, and the Priestly document, completed about the end of the same period, were incorporated with the previous compilation a little later by a Deuteronomic editor. The result was a Pentateuch, not a Hexateuch, which was recognized as the law of God in 445 B.C.

König thinks that the Elohist lived as early as the time of the Judges, and that the Yahwist should be placed in the reign of David. Deuteronomy originated soon after 722 B.C., the date of the fall of Samaria. The completion of the Priestly document, however, he brings down into the sixth century before our era. These various writings were finally wrought into the Pentateuch, or, perhaps, the Priestly document was added by Ezra in Babylonia to a compilation previously made from the other three,

A comparison of these three schemes will bring out the significant fact, that, while they all follow Dillmann in placing the Elohist before the Yahwist, they incline to place Deuteronomy considerably earlier than 621 B.C., but to bring the Priestly document nearer to the date proposed by Wellhausen.

Let us now consult a few representatives of Wellhausen's school, and first Cornill. In the sixth edition of his *Einleitung* (1908) he dates the various sources as follows: the Yahwistic in its original form in the reign of Jehoshaphat, or about 850 B.C.; the Elohist in the reign of Jeroboam II, about a century later; Deuteronomy a little before 621 B.C.; and the Priestly document about 500 B.C. The first two, after being revised and enlarged, were united about 650 B.C.; the third, after having gone through two editions, was added during the Exile; and the fourth, which Cornill identifies with the Law promulgated by Ezra, between 444 and 400 B.C.

The dates given by Cornill are very widely accepted, and have the support of many eminent scholars. I will mention only Holzinger in Germany and Carpenter in England, who, as the result of special and thorough researches on the subject, have adopted them all. But it will be well to add the testimony of three other scholars who differ more or less from Cornill.

The first is Gunkel, the introduction to whose commentary on Genesis has been translated into English. He attributes to schools of story-tellers the substance of the two works on which the first compilation was based. The Yahwistic collection, he thinks, had its origin in the ninth century B.C., the Elohist in the first half of the eighth; they were wrought into one work toward the end of the Jewish monarchy. The Priestly document—he has no occasion to discuss the age of Deuteronomy—was completed in the first half of the fifth century B.C., and was not added to the previous compilation until after its publication by Ezra in 444 B.C.

The opinion of Baentsch is important because he has recently been quoted as against the theory of Wellhausen. His views are found in his commentary on the Middle Books of the Pentateuch, which he has analyzed as thoroughly as any one who has ever made them an object of study. He does not assign exact dates to the sources from which these books were compiled, but he holds that the Yahwistic document originated not long before 800 B.C., the Elohist somewhat later, and Deuteronomy in the seventh century B.C. In the Priestly document he sees a work, very little of which is earlier than Ezekiel, substantially complete in 444 B.C., when it was made public by Ezra.

Finally, let me cite Steuernagel, because he has made a special study of Deuteronomy. His conclusion with reference to the sources of the Pentateuch is as follows: The original Yahwist dates from the beginning of the ninth century B.C., the Elohist from the first half of the eighth. The original of Deuteronomy, parts of which may have been written as early as 720 B.C., was composed about 650 B.C. and made public in 623 (621). The Priestly document, a product of the literary activity of the Exile, dates from perhaps 500 B.C. The first two were united between 700 and 623 (621) B.C. Deuteronomy in an enlarged form was

added about 550 B.C., and the Priestly document between 445 and 330 B.C.

It has frequently been made a subject of reproach and ridicule that the Biblical critics do not agree among themselves. Those who thus treat them forget that men who value the truth above all else do not take kindly to compromises. This being the case, it is significant that these five representatives of the school of Wellhausen differ so little from one another and from the original position of their leader. They all refer the Yahwist to the ninth century B.C., the Elohist to the eighth, and Deuteronomy to the seventh century; and none of them dates the Priestly source before the Exile. The one who varies most from the average opinion is Steuernagel, whose elaborate theory on the origin of Deuteronomy requires that the collection of laws which formed the nucleus of the book be placed as early as 690 B.C. It should also be noted that all those who express an opinion on the subject agree with Kuenen that it was the Priestly document, and not, as Wellhausen still holds, the completed Pentateuch, to which the Jews pledged obedience in 444 (445) B.C. There are, however, no signs of a disposition to abandon the documentary hypothesis.

This is the situation in the critical camp; but, say some, these scholars are living in a fool's paradise, taking no thought of the danger threatening from more than one direction. Personally, I do not believe that there is cause for apprehension. We cannot pass in review all the attempts to disprove the prevalent theory, but it is worth while to notice the book entitled *The Problem of the Old Testament*, published in 1906 by Professor James Orr of Glasgow. The author is a theologian with an enviable reputation, who has read widely, and apparently feels at home in his subject. His book, of which the jaunty motto is, *Nubecula est, quae cito evanescet*, puts the case against the critics as well, perhaps, as any work that could be mentioned. It has doubtless encouraged for the time being popular opposition to their contention; but is it convincing?

Professor Orr begins with a statement of the problem. He insists that it is twofold, and that the first question is how we are to conceive of the religion of the Old Testament "as respects its nature and origin" (p. 4), because, although, as he admits,

the rule is not without exceptions, "the decisions arrived at on purely literary questions . . . are largely controlled by the view taken of the origin and course of development of the religion, and, with a different theory on these subjects, the judgments passed on the age, relations, and historical value of particular writings would be different" (p. 5). In the end he requires that the student have, not only a conception of the Hebrew religion, but one that involves a supernatural revelation, and he warns his readers that "it cannot be too constantly borne in mind that it is not any and every kind of admission of the supernatural which satisfies the Christian demand" (p. 22). In other words, in spite of his assertion that "the age, authorship, and simple or composite character of a book are matters for investigation" (p. 16), he really substitutes for the bias of which he repeatedly accuses the critics a prejudice in favor of an opposite opinion. He goes so far as to claim the support of Wellhausen in this position, although any one who will take the trouble to read in their connection the words quoted,—*"it is only within the region of religious antiquities and dominant religious ideas . . . that the controversy can be brought to a definite issue,"*—will find that they refer, not to the standpoint of the critic, but to data by which, as well as by the linguistic and historical contents, he must be guided in his analysis. He will find, also, that they immediately follow an arraignment of the writer's predecessors for being blinded by their prejudices, and therefore acting like firemen who make a great show of zeal but take care not to go near the conflagration.

In his second chapter, Professor Orr, not content with the preparation already made for the study of the Old Testament, thinks it desirable to "look for a little at the book itself, in the form in which we have it, and allow its own voice to be heard on its own character and place in the economy of revelation." Then he proceeds in advance of proof to claim for it "in the form," be it noted, "in which we have it," a "remarkable" unity and a progressive development in its history and religion toward completion in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Now, while most Biblical scholars would probably agree that a unity of purpose shows itself in the actual history of the Chosen People, and

progress toward the revelation of God in and by Christ, it is rather too much to ask them to allow any one to take for granted one of the most essential points in dispute. The modern critic says, and undertakes to prove, that the Pentateuch is not, in the proper sense of the word, a unit, that is, homogeneous; and, as for progress in doctrine, the first chapter of Genesis implies an idea of God more advanced than is found in Deuteronomy.

The body of Professor Orr's work consists of eight chapters. The first is an argument from critical premises to show the antiquity and credibility of the Pentateuchal history. The next three are devoted to criticism of critical theories relating to this history and to the religion and institutions of the Hebrews. In the remaining four are discussed, in order, the Jehovistic analysis, the question of Deuteronomy, the Priestly code, and the Priestly document as a whole. His treatment of these various topics constantly betrays the influence of the doctrine of revelation assumed in the beginning; its tone throughout is apologetic rather than scientific; and it does scant justice to the evidence on which the documentary theory is founded. The close of the last chapter shows what is the outcome of his argument.

"To what conclusion," he asks, "have we now been led?" and he replies, "Not to the conclusion that Moses himself wrote the Pentateuch in the precise shape or extent in which we now possess it; for the work, we think, shows very evident signs of various pens and styles, of editorial redaction, of stages of compilation. . . . On the other hand, very strongly to the view of the unity, essential *Mosaicity*, and relative antiquity of the Pentateuch. . . . In the collation and preparation of the materials for this work—some of them, perhaps, reaching back into pre-Mosaic times—and the laying of the foundations of the existing narrative, to which Moses by his own compositions, according to the consistent tradition, lent the initial impulse, many hands and minds may have co-operated, and may have continued to co-operate after the master mind was removed; but unity of purpose and will gave a corresponding unity to the product of their labors. . . . We have found no good reason for separating the *J* and *E* of the critics, and regarding them as independent documents; and as little for placing their origin as late as the ninth or eighth century. . . . We have been led on historical and critical grounds to reject the theory of the Josianic origin of *Deuteronomy* and, in accordance with the claims of the book itself, to affirm the genuineness of the Deuteronomic discourses, substan-

tially in the form in which we have them. . . . We have found that there are the strongest critical reasons for denying that the *P writing* (the peculiarities of which are acknowledged) ever subsisted as an independent document. . . . Further, from the close relation subsisting between P and JE in the narratives, we are compelled to assign both, as elements of a composite work, to practically the same age. . . . We have used the term 'collaboration' and 'co-operation' to *express the kind and manner of the activity* which, in our view, brought the Pentateuchal books into their present shape, less, however, as suggesting the definite theory of origin than as indicating the labor of original composers, working with a common end, in contrast with the idea of late irresponsible redactions, combining, altering, manipulating, enlarging at pleasure. . . . Beyond this we do not find it possible to go with any degree of confidence. It may well be—though everything here is more or less conjectural—that, as already hinted, the original JEP history and Code embraced, not simply the Book of the Covenant, but a brief summary of the Levitical ordinances, analogous, as Dillmann thinks, to the so-called Law of Holiness; possibly, also, as Delitzsch supposes, a short narrative, in its proper place, of the decisions of Moses and of his death. We have seen that Deuteronomy, in its original form, was probably an independent work; the priestly laws, also, would be at first chiefly in the hands of the priests. Later, but still, in our opinion early,—possibly in the times immediately succeeding the conquest, but not later than the days of the undivided kingdom,—the original work would be enlarged by union with Deuteronomy and the incorporation of the larger mass of Levitical material. In some such way, with possible revision by Ezra, or whoever else gave the work its final, canonical shape, our Pentateuch may have arisen."

This is Professor Orr's solution of the problem of the Old Testament as it relates to the Pentateuch. The first thing that strikes one on reading it is that it is by no means the traditional view, but a new theory, or rather a combination of features from various theories that have been, or are, entertained by others. Then, one after another, its weaknesses emerge.

In the first place, this theory, with its various pens and styles, its authors, redactors, and compilers, is as complicated as the one that its author ridicules, and much less intelligible.

Secondly, it is unsatisfactory in that the author, having assumed the unity of the Pentateuch, and proved to his own satisfaction that the Yahwist and the Elohist are one, and that the Priestly writer belongs to the same age, has no sufficient basis for so elaborate a scheme.

Thirdly, it is asserted that Moses by his own compositions "lent the impulse" to the production of the Pentateuch, but the only parts of it attributed, or, if they represent him, attributable to him, are the discourses in Deuteronomy, delivered just before his death in Moab.

Fourthly, the view that the Yahwistic and the Deuteronomic documents, and the Priestly so far as to include the Law of Holiness, belong to the same age, is open to the same objection made against the traditional belief on the subject, namely, that the origin of the three, not merely distinct, but at many points conflicting, codes found in these sources within the Mosaic period is incredible.

Fifthly, the reasons for distinguishing between a Yahwist and an Elohist are as good of their kind as those for recognizing a Priestly writer distinct from either or both of them. It is therefore inconsistent to admit the latter, and refuse to admit the former distinction.

Finally, the denial, with Klostermann, of the independence of the Priestly writer or writers, is an attempt to revive the "supplementary hypothesis," which was widely accepted in the first half of the last century, but was long ago abandoned by Biblical scholars generally because it did not do justice to the persistent internal discrepancy between passages of any given literary type and those belonging to any other.

I need not go into further details. Professor Orr's theory will not satisfy conservative students of the Old Testament when they come to understand it. I am sure that it will not convert any of the critics. It will probably, after having served for a season as a sort of half-way house for careful or timid people, go the way of all makeshifts and compromises—and be forgotten.

The Problem of the Old Testament, and other works of the same character, are not the only agency on which those who reject the current theory of the origin of the Pentateuch rest their hope that it will speedily be overthrown. They think they have found powerful allies in the archaeologists, some of whom have gone out of their way to encourage this opinion. Not long ago there appeared in a theological review the statement that "these new revelations from the mounds of the old Orient prove conclusively

that what Wellhausen and his school have regarded as basal facts were after all nothing more than plausible but unfounded hypotheses, the fond fancies of dreamers" (*Methodist Review*, 1908, pp. 645 ff.). In a later issue of the same publication Professor Orr is quoted as saying that "in Old Testament scholarship itself, under the influence of the new so-called historical-critical movement, there is taking place a profound change of opinion, which threatens very soon to make the Wellhausen school, alike in its historical construction and in many of its critical results, as obsolete as the school of Baur is in New Testament criticism" (1909, pp. 646 ff.).

These statements are evidently made in good faith. If they are well founded, although the documentary hypothesis has thus far withstood the direct attacks of conservative scholars, the outlook for it is gloomy.

The first thing that strikes one on reading such an announcement is the strangeness of an appeal to the orientalist, who, however much they may reverence the Scriptures, do not accept the traditional interpretation of it, and therefore must sometimes prove unwelcome allies. There is, perhaps, no Assyriologist who is more frequently quoted in America by conservative students of the Old Testament than Professor Hommel. He is reckoned among the defenders of the faith because he maintains that Abraham and Chedorlaomer were contemporaries, and that the fourteenth chapter of Genesis is veritable history. But those who thus regard him overlook the fact that, in so doing, he throws out of joint the entire system of chronology interwoven with the historical books from Genesis to Kings; also that, although, if the invasion of Palestine by the king of Elam occurred between 1772 and 1742 B.C., then according to the Biblical figures the world must have been created about 3775 B.C., he yet has no hesitation in saying in Hastings's *Dictionary* (I, p. 223a) that we have records of a civilization in Babylonia as far back as 5000 B.C. Now, it is evident that, whether Hommel is right or wrong with reference to the date of Chedorlaomer, or the antiquity of Babylonian civilization, it is hardly safe for conservatives to quote him as one of their authorities, or for him to allow himself to be so regarded.

The point I have just made has its value, but it does not go

to the root of the matter. The real weakness of the appeal to archaeology is in the fact that its testimony has no bearing on the question at issue. Cornill, in the preface to the last edition of his *Einleitung*, referring to what he calls "the panbabylonian deluge," says: "It does not touch the problem of literary criticism. If there were discovered today, on a tablet of Ur-ghanna of Sirgulla, dated 4500 B.C., a legal document corresponding to the Priests' Code, the Priests' Code as a product of Israelite literature would nevertheless remain a Babylonian writing of 500 B.C.; and if the excavations in Palestine brought to light an authentic monument commemorating a victory by Hammurabi, Genesis 14 would not cease to be a very late midrash partly based on ancient material." This is not a vain boast, as any one can see who will consider just what Biblical criticism means and what the critical hypothesis claims to have determined. The critics, finding in the Pentateuch as it has been transmitted reasons for believing it a composite production, proceed by means of divergencies in style and content to analyze it and restore, as far as possible, the sources from which they suspect that it was compiled. If they find these supposed documents not strictly homogeneous, they note the elements of which they seem to be composed and their relation to one another. Finally, they compare with one another, the documents, or parts of documents discovered, determine, if possible, by means of indications of various kinds, their relative dates, and arrange them in chronological order. Now it is plain that, when the critics decide that a document is of a certain date, they do not mean that every part of it without exception originated at that time, or that the parts that betray lateness may not have had earlier, even much earlier, forms, but only that the document or passage, in its present form or setting, belongs to a certain period. If, therefore, as Cornill says, it could be proved that Chedorlaomer actually invaded Palestine, with Hammurabi in his train, the establishment of this fact would not invalidate evidence of lateness in the Biblical account of the expedition.

The point I have been trying to illustrate, that the documentary hypothesis has to do with the process by which the Pentateuch became what it is rather than with the substance of its contents, explains some things about which there has been no little confu-

sion. In the first place, it explains how it is that, as Professor Orr says, "among the foremost" critical scholars "there are many whom no one who understands their work would dream of classing as other than believing, and defenders of revealed religion" (p. 8). It explains, also, some alleged defections from the ranks of the higher critics. Thus the author of one of the articles on recent phases of German theology quotes Baentsch as saying in a previous publication: "They [the views of Wellhausen] capture one theological chair after another. In spite of the disfavor with which conservatives in State and Church regarded them, they nevertheless have forced men of mature judgment and unquestionable piety to accept and defend them." Then he adds: "The above from Professor Baentsch's pen no doubt reflected the opinion of most Old Testament scholars in Germany for the past quarter of a century. Now, however, we see signs on every hand that there is a change going on. Wellhausenism, though strongly intrenched, is being gradually assailed, and that from different standpoints. Strange to say, one of its most resolute assailants is Baentsch. He has gone so far as to write a very interesting brochure entitled 'The Monotheism of the Ancient Orient and of Israel,' with the avowed purpose of reconstructing or superseding the teaching of Wellhausen and his adherents." Now, although in the extract the documentary hypothesis is not mentioned, I think one is justified in supposing that the author had it in mind as a part of the teaching of Wellhausen, and that the average reader would so understand him. If so, the language used misrepresents Baentsch and his position. He has not, like Professor Eerdmans of Leyden, rejected the critical hypothesis, or thought of so doing. In 1903, when he published his commentary on the book of Numbers, he said: "The examples [of repetition and divergence] cited, which might be multiplied, sufficiently show that the books from Exodus to Numbers present, not a homogeneous narrative, but a composite of different elements. The separate elements are not disconnected fragments, but they dispose themselves according to language and style and internal relations in three distinct, characteristic narratives, in which can easily be discerned the peculiarities of the three sources, namely, the Yahwist (J), the Elohist (E), and the Priest Code,

or so-called Original Document (P), first distinguished in Genesis" (*Einleitung*, p. viii). In another place he declares that "we have in the Pentateuch the product of a literary process beginning with the close of the ninth century and continuing into the second century B.C." (p. lxvi). This was his position in 1903, and, strange as it may appear, there is nothing in his more recent book to show that he has abandoned it. In fact, he declares in that work that the determination of the structure and origin of these books must be left to Biblical criticism (p. 99); also that the reports concerning the work of Moses "come from a time so much later that we may not unhesitatingly use them as records" (p. 83); and finally, that it must not be forgotten that Wellhausen, Stade, and others have brought to light knowledge concerning the prophets and the historical position of the Law that has lasting value and entitles them to enduring fame (p. 108). This is Baentsch's position in the book in question with regard to the documentary hypothesis. How then can he be reckoned among the assailants of Wellhausenism? The explanation is simple. When the documentary hypothesis was launched in its prevalent form, some of its adherents coupled with it views on historical or theological subjects which the acceptance of it did not require or imply. There were those, for example, who not only questioned the historicity of the patriarchs and Moses, but, with Kuenen, denied the uniqueness of the Hebrew religion. From the first there have been many, especially in Great Britain and America, who refused to adopt these radical opinions. There have also always been more conservative scholars on the Continent. One of the latter is Cornill, who says of himself in the preface already quoted: "In the summer of 1879, when, as a newly inducted instructor at Marburg, I lectured for the first time on the earliest history of Israel, at a time when such a view was not the fashion, but, for a young beginner, positively perilous,—since he could thereby only bring upon himself the reproach of being most lamentably behind the times,—I declared, and thoroughly proved my contention, that Abraham was a strictly historical character and religious hero, and the covenant and legislation through Moses at Sinai an indisputable fact; and I have always maintained this position." Now Baentsch thinks that the critics do not give

the Hebrews, or the neighboring peoples, due credit for the progress they had made, even in early times, on the way toward monotheism,—another question, observe, distinct from that of the origin of the Pentateuch,—and his book is his protest in the matter. It is by no means hostile to the documentary theory, of which, as I have shown, he is one of the most prominent exponents.

The survey here undertaken would not be complete without a word about what is called “panbabylonianism.” This had its origin in an intellectual tendency corresponding to the optical illusion that causes one to see things on which one’s eyes have for some time been intently fixed in places where they are not objectively present. The general doctrine of panbabylonianism has various phases. The one in which we are at present interested is that which has been given to it by Winckler and Jeremias, and which might be more exactly denominated panbabylonian astralism, the gist of it being that the popular Babylonian religion made the starry sky a revelation of the will of the gods, and that this system of astral mythology was disseminated among other peoples, and is reflected more or less clearly in the conception of the world and religion embodied in the Old Testament. I shall not go into a further description of the theory or attempt a detailed estimate of its value. Such a description and criticism by Professor Toy appeared in this *Review* for January of the current year. I will, however, in a few words indicate why it should not disturb us.

In the first place, it has no bearing on Wellhausen’s theory, properly so called, since it has to do, not with the literary form, but with the religious content, of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is therefore not surprising that Winckler and Jeremias, who are its best-known exponents, and its adherents generally, take for granted the composite character of the Pentateuch.

Secondly, strange as it may seem, this theory is not hostile to a generous estimate of the historical and religious value of the Old Testament. Thus Baentsch, who has adopted it, finds in it support for his protest against the representation of the Mosaic age as a barbarous one, and the Hebrew religion of the time as largely a combination of fetishism, totemism, animism, and other like

superstitions. Jeremias, in the preface to the last edition of his book, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients*, is even more explicitly conservative. He says: "I agree with those who seek in the Old Testament a realm of historically developed revelation. The Israelite representation of God and redemption is not a distillation of human ideas produced in various regions of the Orient, but everlasting truth in the brilliant dress of oriental modes of thought." This avowal ought to convince any one that, whether panbabylonianism is a reality or only a figment of the orientalist imagination, it is not a serious menace to a rational faith in the divine origin of the Hebrew religion.

A few words, to close, on the outlook. First, it can hardly be doubted that the documentary hypothesis, in substantially the prevalent outlines, has come to stay: that is to say, we shall have to accept the theory that the early narratives of the Old Testament are composite productions, compiled from various sources in which had previously been embodied the unfolding conceptions of the Hebrews concerning their past. If I were asked to go more into detail, I should say that this theory will finally be modified to this extent, namely, that the critics will have to agree to refer the original of Deuteronomy to a date nearer 700 than 621 B.C., and more clearly to recognize the existence in all the documents of material derived from oral or written sources, older, and in some cases much older, than the documents themselves. These concessions made, the result will be just what it was in the case of the theory of evolution. At first we rejected and anathematized it, because some who held it ignored God, and we saw no way to reconcile it with faith in his sovereignty; but, when we realized that no law can execute itself, we accepted the new doctrine, and soon found it even more worthy of "his eternal power and god-head" than our previous ideas concerning the origin of the world. So also we shall finally adjust ourselves to the idea of evolution as applied to the Pentateuch and the Hebrew Scriptures generally, and find in it one of our strongest arguments for the divinity of their origin.

Meanwhile the archaeologists will not have been idle. They will not have made good the sweeping boast that Hebrew religious thought was dominated by astral myths, because it will be easy,

when some one thoroughly at home in the Old Testament undertakes it, to show that the indications on which the panbabylonians base their contention are really only relics of popular beliefs which the Biblical writers, so far from accepting, were engaged in eliminating. These enthusiastic scholars, however, will have thrown so much light upon the ancient Orient that it will then be much easier than now to test the correctness of the earliest Hebrew narratives, and, I think, also, much easier to believe in the historicity of at least the more significant Hebrew worthies.

I will close with a quotation from the Dutch critic, Wildeboer. "We must go forward," he says, "in the new way; and with firm confidence. We will not allow ourselves to be disturbed in our work, either by presumptuous Assyriologists or by those who, in the name of religion and Christendom, think they must call us from our path. . . . We are confident that the same Power who has brought us face to face with these problems will lead us forth from the struggle to higher ground and a deeper conviction. He who trusts the truth has God at his side."